

Famous 'trod the boards' at Grand

Ts NOV 4 1984

Community Affairs File

To say the people of Terre Haute and the surrounding area were entertainment hungry in 1897 is putting it mildly. The city had been without a theater since fire destroyed the Naylor Opera House July 21, 1896.

Contractor August Fromme began construction of the Grand Opera House, southeast corner of Seventh and Cherry streets, May 1, 1897. In just six months, the new theater was completed. The grand opening was Nov. 2. Designed by local architect W. H. Floyd, the theater cost about \$100,000.

Seats for the first performance were auctioned at the Terre Haute House the previous week. The seats didn't bring any fancy prices, but the interest shown guaranteed a large crowd would turn out for opening night. The remainder of the seats were sold at the box office for 50 cents, 75 cents, \$1 and \$1.50.

Because of the uncertainty of the opening date, it was impossible for the manager, Theodore W. Barhydt Jr., to book an attraction that had not been presented here before. All the new shows were booked solid, and an unplanned, one-night stand, such as this, couldn't be arranged far enough in advance.

The comic opera "Isle of Cham-

Historically speaking



Clark is Vigo County's official historian and formerly worked for The Terre Haute Tribune.

By Dorothy Clark
Special to The Tribune-Star

pagne," starring Richard Golden and Katherine Germaine with a supporting cast of more than 60, was the opening attraction. The production boasted "handsomescenery and costumes, a full ballet, and a fine orchestra."

The former doorkeeper at the old Naylor Opera House, Will Parrott, was chosen to be in charge of the lower floor. Head usher on the lower floor was George A. Schaal Jr. Charles Stewart was head usher of the balcony, the area known as "family circle" at the Naylor.

Wearing uniforms of dark green

trimmed with black braid were the ushers: Edison Wagner, Roy Sibley, Ray Lawrence, Fred Butz, George Helmer, John Staff Jr., Robert Heinl, Blinn Hunter and Charles Ryan.

A lady attendant checked the ladies' hats before they entered the theater, a sensible custom that was becoming popular at that time. In fact, the programs carried a warning about hat removal. Patrons could rent opera glasses for 25 cents.

Following the highly successful opening of the Grand Opera House, Manager Barhydt slipped off to Quincy, Ill., where he married Henrietta Viola Schultheis, daughter of George and Minnie Schultheis, prominent residents of that city. The newlyweds returned to live at the Terre Haute House after a brief honeymoon in Chicago.

James Paxton Voorhees, son of the Tall Sycamore of the Wabash, Sen. Daniel Voorhees, was also staying at the Terre Haute House and attended opening night. He had recently resigned his position at the Congressional Library to devote more time to his stage appearances. Voorhees had presented monologues entitled

"Out of the Past" quite successfully on the New York and Washington stages. Under the sponsorship of the local Jackson Club, he appeared on the stage of the new Grand Opera House.

Later during opening week a well-attended amateur minstrel show was presented by the young ladies of Terre Haute. Rose Herz and Laura Cox acted as end men complete with bones and tambourines, along with Janie Hunter, Eva Hollinger, Mable Cook, Alice Hammerstein, Franceska Strong, Neida Dickson, Grace Jenckes, Julia Ford and Elsie Crawford.

Cora O'Boyle performed a whistling solo, and vocal solos were given by Louise Smith and Mrs. George F. Westfall. They also made up a quartet with Edith Longman and Jessie Perdue. A second quartet included Carrie Hyde, Mary Bridewell and Lucy and Margaret Farral.

Music was provided by the full Ringgold Orchestra. Professor Duenweg directed several dances. The chorus was composed of 60 voices.

So many famous people "trod the boards" at the Grand. James Whitcomb Riley spoke before a packed house in 1903. He was introduced

by Max Ehrmann, who was to appear on the same stage some years later as a noted lecturer and philosopher, reading from his own poems and other writings.

Another native son, Eugene V. Debs, spoke before capacity crowds at the Grand Opera House several times. Actors and actresses, musicians and performers of the old vaudeville days, all the famous and those who were later to become famous, appeared in traveling shows at the Grand.

Many of Terre Haute's older citizens could remember the never-to-be-forgotten stage performance of "Ben Hur." The chariot race scene in this play required a very large stage, and the new Grand was one of the largest in Indiana.

The first "talking picture" ever shown in Terre Haute was on the silver screen at the Grand. This Al Jolson classic was the forerunner of the big change in the entertainment field.

After 62 years of providing the people of Terre Haute and the surrounding area much pleasure and many happy memories, the doors were closed in 1959. The building was razed for a parking lot later that year.

Vigo County Public Library

Community Affairs File

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Grand Opera House.
Terre Haute, Ind.



Photo/ Dorothy J. Clark collection

And a grand house it was...

The Grand Opera House was built in 1897 at the southeast corner of Seventh and Cherry streets. The theater offered entertainment-hungry Terre Hauteans

stage shows, famous actors and actresses, vaudeville, silent movies and the town's first talking movie. This

is how the building looked in 1910, 49 years before it was demolished.

WABASH VALLEY

P R O F I L E S

A series of tributes to hometown heroes who have made a difference.

T-S A 6

Grand Opera House

JUN 28 2009

For more than six decades, the Terre Haute theater originally known as the Grand Opera House was a downtown landmark. Few recall that an emergency hastened its construction.

When the elegant Naylor Opera House at the northeast corner of Fourth and Wabash was ravaged by fire on July 21, 1896, Terre Haute was without a major entertainment center. There were several small theaters and dance halls in the city, but none was capable of hosting major New York productions or premier stage or vaudeville stars.



The heirs of Wilson Naylor, who died Dec. 2, 1892, owned the opera house at the time of the fire. Executor Benjamin G. Cox, Naylor's grandson, pondered reconstruction at the former site. However, the Terre Haute Hotel Co., headed by William P. Ijams, already was planning a new opera house on the southeast corner of Seventh and Cherry streets immediately north of the Terre Haute House. Prominent architect W. Homer Floyd had prepared a set of blueprints. When Ijams proceeded with plans to build the Grand Opera House, deliberations regarding a second opera house were scuttled. Experienced theater manager Theodore W. Barhydt was brought to Terre Haute to manage the facility. He had previously owned and operated theaters in Burlington and Ottumwa, Iowa, and Peoria and Quincy, Ill.

The five-story building, called the Grand Opera Block, also offered numerous office spaces on three of its top four floors. Ground was broken June 8, 1897, and the theater was christened on Nov. 2, 1897. More than 1,600 patrons were present at the gala opening to watch *The Isle of Champagne*, starring Katherine Germaine and Richard Golden. Col. William E. McLean gave a stirring dedicatory address.

Barhydt, remembered for building the Hippodrome Theater (1914) and the Indiana Theater (1922), continued the tradition of bringing the best in theater, music and vaudeville to Terre Haute. Sarah Bernhardt, Ethel Barrymore, Tyrone Power, George M. Cohan, Eddie Foy, John Philips Sousa, Eva Tanguay and Lew Dockstader were only a few of the many stars appearing on the Grand Opera House stage in its early years. Local theater products Rose Melville, Alice Fischer, Valeska Suratt and Rose Fehrenbach (known as Marie Roslyn) were given homecoming receptions upon their respective returns.

Barhydt relinquished duties at the Grand in 1918 but the theater remained in capable hands under the management of Shannon and Samuel Katzenbach and John Arthur. However, the nature of the entertainment altered. As the popularity of vaudeville and touring legitimate theater ebbed in the late Twenties and early Thirties due to talking motion pictures, the building was renamed the Grand Theater and specialized in cinema.

Soon after a decision was made to raze the Grand in 1959 to provide adjacent parking for the Terre Haute House, a sentimental final tribute was held. Demolition occurred Aug. 6, 1960. The former Liberty Theater, at the southwest corner of Eighth and Wabash, was refurbished and opened as the "new Grand Theater." In 1978 the Terre Haute Tribune-Star Publishing Co. purchased the "second" Grand to house its new presses.

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Grand Opera House



OLD GRAND'S LAST GASP—Wrecking job on the old Grand Opera House was completed Friday and a parking lot soon will occupy the area. Anton Hulman Jr., the owner; Patrolman John Bedwell and Joyce Shanks, Tribune reporter, watch as the steel ball used by the wrecking crew blasts the last corner of the building. No cornerstone was found. Photo by Charles.

Saturday Trib Aug 6 - 1960

Grand Just A Memory as Demolition Job Is Ended

By JOYCE SHANKS

Crashing brick and stone tumbling down amid a mushrooming cloud of dust formed the final curtain in the history of the Grand Opera House Building Friday afternoon.

Workmen from the Indiana Wrecking Company, directed by Ralph Learnard, skillfully knocked down the remaining ex-

terior walls on the Cherry and Seventh street sides as an audience of interested spectators viewed the proceedings from several vantage points.

Heads were poked out of second and third floor windows of the Post Office, and from higher windows in the Rose Dispensary Building. Observers were also watching from the adjacent Terre Haute House as well as from ground level. Owner of the property Anton Hulman Jr. was among the bystanders.

No cornerstone was found during the wrecking operation, and Dick Brokaw, foreman for the Indiana Wrecking Company, speculated that during the time that the building was constructed, around 1896, the laying of cornerstones required special building appropriations which were not always available.

The property will be used as a parking lot.

Emeline Fairbanks Mem. Library

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T. H. Fletcher
11-30-60

T. H. House Sold in Huge Realty Deal

2-28-59-S

**Hotel, Grand Opera
House Block, Garage
Involved in Transfer
To Hulman Interests**

Purchase of the Terre Haute Hotel Company by the Hulman interests, which was announced yesterday, revealed one of the largest, if not the largest, downtown real estate and property transfers in many years.

The Terre Haute Hotel Company owns the Terre Haute House, the Grand Opera House Block and the Terre Haute House Garage. With the acquisition of this property, the Hulman interests now own the entire block bounded by Wabash Avenue, Seventh, Eighth and Cherry streets with one exception. That is the Fort Harrison Savings Association property, which also includes the old Orpheum Theater, fronting on Wabash Avenue immediately east of the hotel.

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SPOKESMEN for the new ownership said that the purchase of the property demonstrates the Hulman interests' confidence in downtown Terre Haute and its future.

Earlier this week it was announced that the Grand Opera House Block, erected in 1897, would be razed after Sept. 1. No announcement was forthcoming yesterday concerning the ultimate use of this property at the southeast corner of Seventh and Cherry streets.

The Terre Haute House is the third hotel to occupy the northeast corner of Seventh Street and Wabash Avenue, "the crossroads of the world." Chauncey Rose built the Prairie House on that corner, which he owned, in 1837, starting work in April. It was completed the following year.

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IT HAS been operated as a hotel all but a little less than 10 years of the past 121. Mr. Rose closed it from 1841 to 1849 and then four years after its reopening in 1849 changed the name to Terre Haute House. The building preceding the present structure was razed in 1927 to make room for the present 10-story hotel, which was opened July 2, 1928.

Abraham Lincoln stayed at the Prairie House the year before the name was changed. He brought his son, Robert, here to be treated for a "mad dog" bite. A Mrs. Elizabeth Taylor had a "madstone" and people came from great distances to be treated for dog bites, according to John G. Biel, local historian.

AFTER almost 30 years of ownership, in 1866 Mr. Rose wearied with the "care" of the hotel, it is told, thought of giving it for educational purposes. At that time the Terre Haute Hotel Company was formed and the hotel purchased. Stockholders of the company were: Alexander McGregor, president; John R. Beach, treasurer; Jacob H. Hager, secretary; Thomas Dowling, John T. Usher, T. Hussy, William R. McKeen, Demas Deming, W. B. Tuell, H. Hulman and Mr. Rose, all names recorded often in local history.

This company sold the hotel in 1872 to William M. Hawkins and son of Indianapolis. Four years later W. B. Tuell, an original stockholder, purchased it and continued as proprietor until 1887, when his son, W. M. Tuell, took over.

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A NEW HOTEL company was formed in 1888 with W. P. Ijams, president; Charles Baur, secretary, and Jacob Baur, treasurer.

The company remodeled and enlarged the hotel, which was an example of the Victorian architecture until it was torn down to make way for the present building.

The hotel has 250 rooms and employs 185 persons. It is under the management of Charles M. Ellis, who has been its manager since August, 1933, the longest term of any manager now at any Indiana hotel. The new ownership contemplates no change in management, it was stated, but is considering a number of improvements.

The present hotel was completed the last of June, 1928, and its payroll started June 30 of that year with the first guests accepted July 2 and the formal opening on July 6 and 7. United States Senator James E. Watson was a speaker at one of the opening banquets and Bud Cromwell and his orchestra played for the dancing which followed.

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TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA

Grand Theatre

When the Grand Opera House Was Young ✓

By DOROTHY J. CLARK

TH Trib Star 7/12/59

Over the years the people of Terre Haute have seen many of the old landmarks torn down for one reason or another, usually in the name of progress, which is another term for gas station. The old timers have sighed and philosophically hoped it was for the best, while newcomers to the community have wondered why we haven't torn down more of our old buildings.

However, young and old alike seem to share the same feeling of regret when they realize the days of the old Grand Opera House are numbered. There's always a great deal of sentiment and nostalgia connected with any theater where people have enjoyed themselves and remember with pleasure the good times they have had in the past.

Edward Kennelly, manager of the Grand Theater, tells me that



Dorothy J. Clark

many of his patrons have expressed their reluctance to see the old Grand disappear. There are not too many residents left who can recall the opening of the theater over 61 years ago.

August Fromme, general contractor, broke the ground at the southeast corner of Seventh and Cherry streets on May 1, 1897, and the building was completed just six months later on November 1, 1897, at a cost of \$150,000. Floyd & Stone were the architects. The Prox & Brinkman Mfg. Co. furnished the plumbing, steam heating, boilers, stack, engines, dynamos and steam mains. The lumber was furnished by the Central Mfg. Co.

Owned by the Terre Haute Company, the Grand Opera House had as officers W. P. Ijams, president; Jacob Baur, treasurer, and Chas. Baur, secretary. The directors were John Beggs, Anton Mayer, Herman Hulman, D. W. Minshall, W. R. McKeen, Jacob Baur and Ijams. Other names listed in the first official program dated Nov. 2, 1897, were: T. H. Barhydt, Jr., lessee and manager; Isaac M. Monk, business manager; John Heath, advertising manager; Morton J. Iland, treasurer; W. C. Katz-

enbach, doorkeeper; Shannon Katzenbach, gallery ticket office; Leslie Helmer, gallery door; A. H. Lewis, carpenter and stage manager; Geo. Early, his assistant; Fred Geiger, properties; David Gibson, scenic artist, and Harry Bloodsue, electrician.

The stage assistants were: Ed Clark, Bruce Jeffers, Billy Franz and Jim Monford. On the first floor George Schaal was the head usher, with Robert Heintz, Leroy Sibley, Roy Lawrence and Fred Butz helping him. On the second floor Charles Stewart was head usher, with Earle Rippetoe, Blinn Hunter, Charles Ryan and John Staff assisting. The director was Edison Wagner.

In 1897 it had not been so many years since the idea of taking his family to see a "variety show" would have struck the average man about as favorably as treating his innocent children to a bull-fight. It was not until Col. John D. Hopkins, the recognized vaudeville "impresario" of the West, hit upon the idea of selecting a number of the best features in the variety branch of the theatrical business and forming them into an organization to tour the country, that vaudeville became really popular.

His traveling troupe brought the ladies and children to the theater, and from then on to the advent of "talking pictures," vaudeville was firmly established as theater entertainment fit for the entire family.

George J. Breinig, the present doorman at the Grand Theater, has many fond memories of the old Grand Opera House. It was in 1903, he tells me, that he went

into the Elk's Lodge when it met on the third floor of the Opera House building. He worked for his father's furniture store of Breinig & Miller Company, at 424 Main street, which furnished all the furniture needed for the stage presentations. As an extra courtesy the management provided him with two free permanent passes, enabling him and his sweetheart, Anna Seidel, (now his wife) to attend every stage performance.

It was in November of 1905 that the late Ethel Barrymore played here in "Sunday." On October 16, 1906, she appeared in J. M. Barrie's comedy, "Alice Sit By the Fire."

In January, 1905, Eva Tanguay and her big musical extravaganza company played at the Grand Opera House. One of her famous song hits was "The Sambo Girl" which the newspaper advertisements guaranteed "would be whistled on the streets of Terre Haute all winter."

Otis Skinner appeared in the role of a gypsy rover in "The Harvester" later in that month. In 1906 he starred in "The Duel."

In March of that year George M. Cohan, the Yankee Doodle comedian, appeared in the musical, "Little Johnny Jones." Some of the early moving pictures of that time were called "kinodrome shows" and featured the inauguration of President Roosevelt (Teddy, that is), the Ormond-Dayton, Florida, automobile races and innumerable travel films.

In May, 1905, John Drew played in "The Duke of Killcrankie." Richard Mansfield was seen in "Beau Brummel."

John Philip Sousa played a Sunday performance on his 27th semi-annual tour of the country in September, 1905.

After Rose Melville appeared here in October, 1905, in the comedy "Sis Hopkins," Terre Hauteans were quoting one of her most famous lines from that play—"There ain't no sense in doin' nuthin' for nobody what never done nuthin' for you."

One of the most spectacular stage presentations on the old Grand Opera House stage was "Ben Hur" in which 300 people took part. There were eight horses in the chariot race which galloped across the huge stage with all its excitement.

The American public believes vaudeville of 60 years ago is dead and forgotten, but they are mistaken. Some of the very same acts are seen on television today, and enjoyed as much as ever. Victor Borge and Oscar Levant, well-known comedian-pianists of today, compare favorably with Will H. Fox, the original and extremely funny English comedian-pianist who played here in 1897. Fox's masterpiece was the Paderewski burlesque, which was classed as one of the

most laughable features in vaudeville.

Some of the most popular modern television programs are either situation or domestic comedy sketches. Mr. and Mrs. Arthur C. Sidman appeared here in a little one-act play that dealt with the familiar and ridiculous happenings of every day life. In this sketch the character of the country uncle from Yankeedom made an impromptu visit to his relatives, and his reception by the pert and pretty housemaid formed the ground work for a series of situations full of "the best kind of comedy and genuine humor and a climax which left the audience in a state of convulsion." The team of Morton and Revelle excelled in the comedy sketch involving the husband and wife difficulties which can arise in any well-ordered home. Their modern counterparts are the Danny Thomas show, Peck's Bad Girl, Jack Benny show, December Bride and many others. The American public still enjoys a good laugh, thank goodness!

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Grand Theater Farewell Program Plans Announced

9-16-59 Sub.

Final arrangements for the finale at the Grand Theater next Monday evening at 8:15 o'clock were discussed at a luncheon meeting Wednesday in the Green Room at the Terre Haute House. Members of all committees working on plans for the stellar event and news media attended the meeting.

Special guests included Mayor Ralph Tucker, Edward Kennelly, manager of the Grand Theater; Mrs. Dorothy Clark, secretary of the Vigo County Historical Society; Mrs. B. B. White, co-chairman of the advisory committee of the Grand Theater closing; Sam Beecher Jr., Mrs. Jo Hedges, Ron Waltermire, Elmer Porter, president of Community Theatre; John Avelis, Lester Wolf Mrs. Mitchell Cohan, Miss Nancy

Sep 21, 1959

Langan, all representing Community Theater, and Dr. William Allyn, professor at Indiana State Teachers College, who will serve as master of ceremonies for the closing performance. Mrs. Arthur Cunningham, co-chairman of the event, was unable to be present because of illness.

News media representatives present included Miss Sarah Bence, The Star; Miss Beatrice Biggs, of The Tribune and Ralph McHargue, of WBOW. Dick Bieser, manager WMFT and Mrs. Helen Ryan, WTHI.

The Chamber of Commerce was represented by John Lafib.

One of the early stars of musical comedy who appeared at the Grand Theater in starring roles during its hey day will be here for the gala farewell to the theatre. She is Mrs. Hamilton Coleman of Hendersonville, N. C., the former Lena Shaw, whose stage name was Lena Francis.

Program for the evening will include the presentation of the motion picture, "The Golden Age of Comedy," and the one-act play, "The Twelve-Pound Look," by James M. Barrie.

Mrs. Kenneth Hazledine is directing the play. Characters in it and those playing the parts are: Tombes, the English butler, played by David Lee; Sir Harry Sims, played by Dr. G. David Koch; his wife, Lady Sims, played by Mrs. Rhea Anderson, and his former wife, played by Mrs. Peggy Thornton.

A number of the patrons are interested in wearing costumes. Those in charge said that all persons interested in attending the event in costumes of the period when stage plays and concerts were heard regularly at the Grand are urged to do so.

There will be a pit orchestra, directed by Arthur Hill, head of the music department at ISTC. The union musicians are donating their time for the affair.

Mr. Kenelly announced that the theater box office will be open Monday morning at 9 o'clock for the convenience of those wishing to purchase tickets.

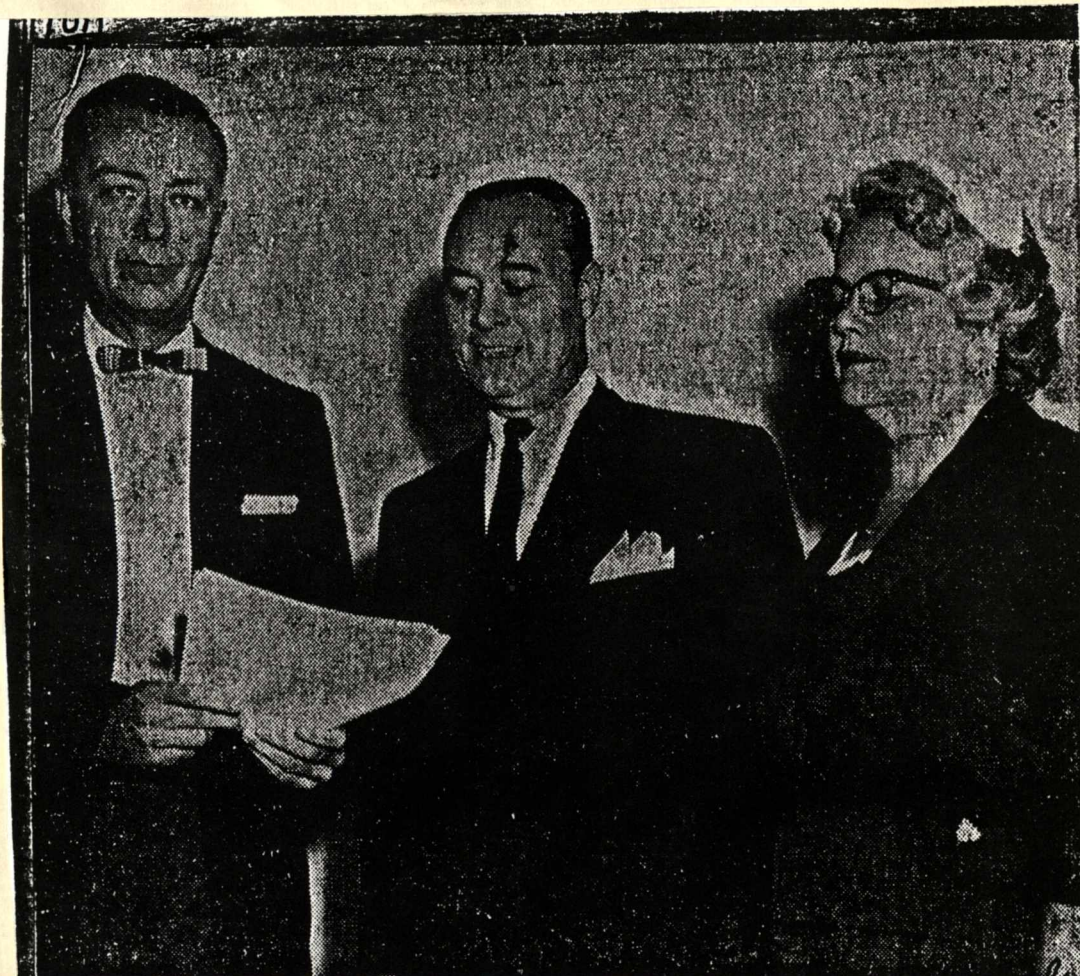
A banquet at 6:30 o'clock Monday evening in the Wabash Room of the Terre Haute House will precede the performance. Lester Wolf will serve as toastmaster and Mayor Tucker will give a brief speech of welcome.

Mr. Waltermire said that plans are underway to remove a portion of the Grand Theater stage and transplant it to the Community Theater.

Community Affairs File

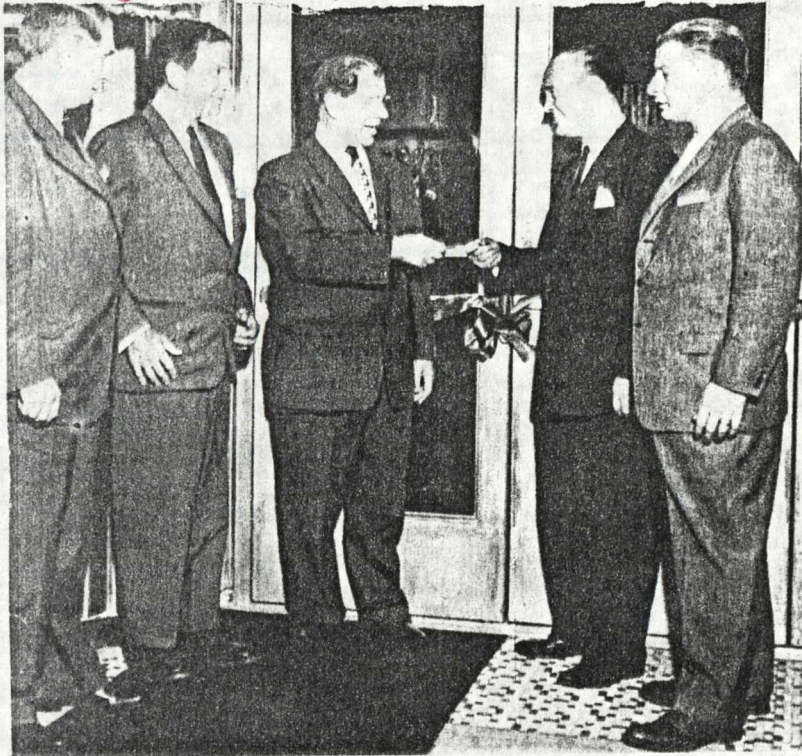
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Sept. 16 - 1957 - Terre Haute
PLAN GRAND FINALE—Elmer Porter (left) of Indiana State Teachers College confers with Mayor Ralph Tucker (center) and Mrs. Robert I. Clark of the Vigo County Historical Society during a Wednesday dinner meeting to complete plans for Sept. 21 program to mark the formal exit of the Grand Theatre and former opera house from the Terre Haute scene.

Tribune 11-22-1959



OPEN NEW GRAND—Mayor Ralph Tucker cuts the ribbon officially opening the new Grand (formerly the Liberty) theatre at Eighth and Wabash. In the official ribbon-cutting party were (from left) Paddy Dee, an associate of S. J. Gregory; Anton Hulman Jr., S. J. Gregory, president of the Alliance Amusement Co.; the Mayor and Spiro Papas, vice president of Alliance. *11-22-59* Photo by Martin.

5-9-72/59 9-22-59 - Star

Nostalgic Adieu Given Grand Theater At Dinner and Closing Performance

BY SARAH E. BENICE

A nostalgia for the past was prevalent last night at the dinner and performance which marked the closing of the Grand Theater, but withal was the realization that changing times and progress

leave little room for sentiment and that relics of the past must pass.

Two women who remember highlights of their career on the Grand stage were present to speak to the audience, both of them native Hoosiers—Mrs. Lena Shaw Coleman of Hendersonville, N. C., and Mrs. Mark Honeywell of Wabash, the former Eugenia Hubbard of Terre Haute.

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THEY WERE introduced at the opening of the second half of the program, which closed with the presentation of the period one-act comedy by Sir James E. Barrie, "The Twelve Pound Lock" by Community Theatre. The first half of the program, the showing of "The Golden Age of Comedy," had provoked many chuckles and guffaws as a majority of the audience recalled seeing many of the scenes in silent movies at the Grand in its early days as a motion picture theater.

Elmer Porter, president of Community Theatre, spoke briefly at the opening of the "Interlude of Memorable Moments" and expressed the appreciation of Community Theatre to Ed Kennelly, manager of the Grand, for the opportunity to stage this farewell performance in co-operation with a number of other organizations. He introduced Mayor Ralph Tucker who spoke briefly in tribute to the Grand, recollecting that Bud Taylor, Terre Haute's bantam weight champion, fought some of his best bouts in the Grand.

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MRS. HONEYWELL, who April

1, 1923, appeared as piano soloist with the Cleveland Symphony there, playing St. Saens' Concerto, in G Minor, paid tribute to two musicians who helped further musical appreciation at the Grand, the late George Jacobs, associated with the Grand, and Miss Anna Hulman, who was Mrs. Honeywell's teacher. She also paid tribute to Mr. and Mrs. Anton Hulman Jr. and Mrs. Anton Hulman Sr. for their many civic projects to make Terre Haute a better place in which to live.

Mrs. Coleman, who at the dinner had reminded her audience that it was almost 81 years since she was born on Tic Ridge, now the town of Blanford, was striking in a silver and black lame dinner dress highlighted with touches of red. She was presented with a bouquet of red roses at the performance following her brief talk.

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"TERRE HAUTE," she recalled, "always was a wonderful audience and theater folk looked forward to playing it and the Grand. I know I did." She had made many return trips here, she said, but she thought this would be the last one.

Her first appearance here on the stage was in the 1900-01 season in "The Burgomaster," and her last in "The Land of Nod," she recalled. She also remembered that her husband, the late Hamilton Coleman, played Shakespeare here with Richard Mansfield. Later he left drama and produced such plays as "The

Time, the Place and the Girl" and "The Girl Question."

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AN ANECDOTE she related was connected with her last performance here when she and William Norris were doing a song, "It's Great to be an Actor" in which they did a travesty on drama between a verse and

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Community Affairs File



HONOR GRAND'S PASSING—Honor guest at last night's farewell to the Grand Theater, Mrs. Lena Shaw Coleman of Hendersonville, N. C., is shown seated at the left, with a number of those who attended the dinner and closing performance in costumes of the Grand's past history. Seated in front are Mrs. Albert F. Kivits and Mrs. B. B. White. Standing, left to right, are Miss Bonnie Farwell, Mrs. Raleigh W. Holmstedt, Kenneth Hazledine, Mrs. Hazledine and Mrs. Elmer Porter.

chorus. She had a big rag doll, she said, which was her "cheeld" and which he, the villain, tried to grab from her. She held it a little too long and the leg came off in Norris' hand and the doll went flying into the box at the right of the stage.

Also introduced was Miss Joanne Ellspermann, who recently has signed a contract for the 1959-60 season with Phoenix Theatre of New York. A telegram of best wishes from Mrs. Arthur Cunningham, who is in the hospital was read by Dr. Allyn.

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HE QUOTED from a history of the Grand by Mrs. Dorothy Clark which recalled that in July, 1896 the Naylor Opera House burned. The next May construction was begun on the Grand and it was completed Nov. 1, 1897 with the first show opening it Nov. 2 with a sell-out despite the fact the play, "Isle of Champagne," was an old one. T. W. Barhydt was the manager. Such famous personages as James Whitcomb Riley, Paul Dresser, Eugene V. Debs and Max Ehrmann had appeared on its stage, it was recalled, and the first talking pictures were shown here at the Grand.

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LESTER WOLF was master of ceremonies for the dinner in Parlors A1, 2 and 3, which was informal and at which Mr. Porter in his appearance said he hoped the farewell would be as memorable as many of the performances at the Grand. In the reminiscing about the Grand at this time it was recalled that the theater once had burlesque billed each Sunday afternoon and evening.

Anton Hulman Jr., when called upon to talk at the dinner said that it was touching to him to see the tribute paid to the Grand and that he, too, had fond memories of seeing his first plays there. However, he pointed out, when the light goes out on the present corner, it will go on at Eighth and Wabash.

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FIKE HAZARDS were part of the reason for the decision to raze the building, he said, recalling that when he was a student in college there was a disastrous fire in New Haven, Conn., in which many students were burned on the fire escapes. The construction necessary to fire-proof the building and theater was not believed good economy, he said, and the tearing down of the building was approved.

Arthur Hill directed the pit orchestra last evening, the orchestra playing through courtesy of the musicians union.

Jane Cunningham Hazledine directed the one-act play which closed the program, with Robert M. Wiandt and Ray Gooderl serving as producers. The colorful performance was given by Rhea Anderson as Lady Sims, Dr. G. David Koch as her husband, Sir Harry Sims; David Lee as

Tombes, the butler, and Peggy Thornton as Kate, Sir Harry's first wife. The portrait which was the center of the attraction in the stage setting was done by Kenneth Hazledine.

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SAMUEL E. BEECHER JR. was chairman of the committee which planned the farewell. Others on the committee were Mrs. Arthur Cunningham, Mrs. Dorothy Clark, Allen Merrill, Ewing Miller, Richard Tuttle, Ronald Waltermire, F. Theodore Hegeman, Mrs. Jo Hedges, Mrs. Mary Townsley, George Mayrose, Miss Nancy Langan, Mrs. Mary Ann McQuillan and Lester Wolf.

Members of the advisory committee were the Mmes. Arthur Cunningham and B. B. White, co-chairman; Harry Dickey, Albert Kivits, J. H. Weinstein, Perle Allen, S. M. Cowgill, T. W. Moorhead, John Hickey, Harry Conlon, Ione Gilbert, Frances Cornell, Malcolm Steele, R. W. Holmstedt, Paul Bogart, David Silverstein, Anton Hulman Sr., Richard Benbridge, George Carroll, Carl Fischer, Walter Talley, Rudolph Yung, Oscar Baur, Josephus C. Davis and Carl Wolf and the Misses Bonnie Farwell, Anna Hulman, Nellie Talley and Helen Condit.

Musicians in last night's orchestra included Leo Baxter, Stanford Gilley, Mrs. Elizabeth Gray, Robert Coppedge, Frank Lidral, Charles Whorwell, George Graesch, Sanford Watts and Bill Cox. Their program included number reminiscent of the early part of the century.

Colorful Farewell Party For Grand Opera House

9-22-1959 - 7-22-59

The final curtain was lowered Monday night on the life and history of a building—the Grand Opera House—as tribute was paid to the closing of the theatre at the Seventh and Cherry street location where some of the earli-

est theatrical productions and stage personalities performed nearly 62 years ago.

Although the new Grand Theatre is soon to open at Eighth and Wabash, Monday's festivities recalled the day in 1897 when the first Grand opened as one of the finest opera houses in the country. They recalled the subsequent years that brought to the city such outstanding stars as Sarah Bernhardt, Ethel Barrymore, Will Rogers, Tyrone Power, Valeska Suratt and many others.

Honored guests at the commemoration dinner and stage performance which followed were Mrs. Lena Shaw Coleman of Hendersonville, N. C., and Mrs. Mark Honeywell of Wabash, the former Eugenia Hubbard. Mrs. Coleman is also a native Hoosier.

Hulman Is Guest.

Speaking to the dinner group, Anton Hulman, Jr., recounted fond memories of some outstanding Grand stage productions as well as movies that were shown on the Grand screen in earlier days of the film industry.

Alluding to the moving of the theatre to a new downtown location, Mr. Hulman advised that construction measures necessary to make the old opera house building safe from fire hazards were not deemed economically sound. The building will soon be razed and replaced with a parking lot.

Mr. Hulman referred to college days and a distasteful memory of a New Haven, Conn., conflagration which claimed the lives of many students. Many were burned to death on the fire escapes, he related in citing the importance of peak fire prevention measures in all public buildings.

Mrs. Coleman and Mrs. Honeywell were introduced at the opening of the second half of the program, which closed with the presentation of the period one-act comedy by Sir James E. Barrie, "The Twelve Pound Lock" by Community Theatre. The first half of the program, the showing of "The Golden Age of Comedy," had provoked many chuckles and guffaws as a majority of the audience recalled seeing many of the scenes in silent movies at the Grand in its early days as a motion picture theater.

Taylor Boxed In Grand.

Elmer Porter, president of Community Theatre, spoke briefly at the opening of the "Inter-

lude of Memorable Moments" and expressed the appreciation of Community Theatre to Ed Kenelly, manager of the Grand, for the opportunity to stage this farewell performance in co-operation with a number of other organizations. He introduced Mayor Ralph Tucker who spoke briefly in tribute to the Grand, recollecting that Bud Taylor, Terre Haute's bantam weight champion, fought some of his best bouts in the Grand.

Mrs. Honeywell, who April 1, 1923, appeared as piano soloist with the Cleveland Symphony there, playing St. Saens' Concerto in G Minor, paid tribute to two musicians who helped further musical appreciation at the Grand, the late George Jacobs, associated with the Grand, and Miss Anna Hulman, who was Mrs. Honeywell's teacher. She also paid tribute to Mr. and Mrs. Anton Hulman Jr. and Mrs. Anton Hulman Sr. for their many civic projects to make Terre Haute a better place in which to live.

Mrs. Coleman, who at the dinner had reminded her audience that it was almost 81 years since she was born on Tic Ridge, now the town of Blanford, was striking in a silver and black lame dinner dress highlighted with touches of red. She was presented with a bouquet of red roses at the performance following her brief talk.

"Terre Haute," she recalled, "always was a wonderful audience and theater folk looked forward to playing it and the Grand. I know I did." She had made many return trips here, she said, but she thought this would be the last one.

At Turn of Century.

Her first appearance here on the stage was in the 1900-01 season in "The Burgomaster," and her last in "The Land of Nod," she recalled. She also remembered that her husband, the late

Hamilton Coleman, played Shakespeare here with Richard Mansfield. Later he left drama and produced such plays as "The Time, the Place and the Girl" and "The Girl Question."

An Anecdote she related was connected with her last performance here when she and William Norris were doing a song, "It's Great to be an Actor" in which they did a travesty on drama between a verse and chorus. She had a 'big rag doll, she said, which was her "cheild" and which he, the villain, tried to grab from her. She held it a

little too long and the leg came off in Norris' hand and the doll went flying into the box at the right of the stage.

Also introduced was Miss Joanne Ellspermann, who recently has signed a contract for the 1959-60 season with Phoenix Theatre of New York. A telegram of best wishes from Mrs. Arthur Cunningham, who is in the hospital was read by Dr. Allyn.

He quoted from a history of the Grand by Mrs. Dorothy Clark which recalled that in July, 1896 the Naylor Opera House burned. The next May construction was completed Nov. 1, 1897 with the first show opening it Nov. 2 with a sell-out despite the fact the play, "Isle of Champagne," was an old one. T. W. Barhydt was the manager.

Lester Wolf was master of ceremonies for the dinner in Parlors A-1, 2 and 3, which was informal and at which Mr. Porter in his appearance said he hoped the farewell would be as memorable as many of the performances at the Grand. In the reminiscing about the Grand at this time it was recalled that the theater once had burlesque billed each Sunday afternoon and evening.

Arthur Hill directed the pit orchestra last evening, the orchestra playing through courtesy of the musicians union.

Stage One-Act Play.

Jane Cunningham Hazeldine directed the one-act play which closed the program, with Robert M. Wlandt and Ray Gooderl serving as producers. The colorful performance was given by Rhea Anderson as Lady Sims, Dr. G. David Koch as her husband, Sir Harry Sims; David Lee as Tombes, the butler, and Peggy Thornton as Kate, Sir Harry's first wife. The portrait which was the center of the attraction in the stage setting was done by Kenneth Hazeldine.

Samuel E. Beecher, Jr., was chairman of the committee which planned the farewell. Others on

the committee were Mrs. Arthur Cunningham, Mrs. Dorothy Clark, Allen Merrill, Ewing Miller, Richard Tuttle, Ronald Waltermire, F. Theodore Hegeman, Mrs. Jo Hedges, Mrs. Mary Townsley, George Mayrose, Miss Nancy Langan, Mrs. Mary Ann McQuillan and Lester Wolf.

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TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA
Community Affairs File

Only Yesterday By Frances E. Hughes

'The Ghost Always Walked' In Terre Haute



Sp DEC 1 1973

Terre Haute was for many years an outstanding theatre town.

It was said that "the ghost always malked" (actors got paid) here because the audiences were always large.

And the audiences were also considered critical. For it was also said that if a show or act was praised by Terre Haute audiences it would be a sure hit in other cities and towns.

In the 1920s, there were many theaters here, and five of them at some time had vaudeville acts and/or stage shows. All were well attended.

Just before the turn of the century, the old Naylor Opera House, located on the northeast corner of Fourth Street and Wabash Avenue, burned to the ground. It was there that many outstanding productions of the day had been presented.

Local Pianists Perform

In the early 1900s, there were theaters that showed the silent movies with such talented local pianists as Mrs. Mildred Harrison, Mrs. Lois Hill and Mrs. Helen Harver Webb playing accompaniment as the words of the actors and actresses flashed on the screens.

Most of these movie houses changed to the talking pictures when they were invented. Some are still in operation.

In the downtown area within a few blocks were the Grand Opera House, southeast corner of Seventh and Cherry streets; Varities (later the Liberty and now the Grand) southwest corner of Eighth and Ohio and Wabash Avenue; Hippodrome, southwest corner of Eighth and Ohio streets; Orpheum, the building still standing next to the Fort Harrison Building and Loan Association; the American, where the Early Wheels Museum is now located, the Princess (earlier called a Nickelodeon) just west of the southwest corner of Sev-

enth Street and Wabash Avenue, and the Indiana in its present location. The Indiana was built in 1922 as one of the most beautiful theaters in this area. At one time, there was also a Young's Garden Theater, an open-air theater called an airdome at 319 Ohio Street.

When the present Grand Theater was called the Varieties, it first presented vaudeville acts and then later changed to movies.

Both vaudeville acts and big stage shows were shown at the Grand Opera House, which later turned into a movie house. Many of the greats of the stage of the day appeared there.

Featured plus five acts

The Hippodrome featured vaudeville for some time and during certain seasons, there were stock companies appearing there daily in two-a-days. A different play was presented every week. Stage shows, such as follies and plays also were featured there. Later, the name of the theater was changed to the Wabash and movies were shown.

The Indiana's bill at one time included a feature picture and five acts of vaudeville. Since a very fine organ was installed in the theater when it was built, organ recitals also were a part of the bill for some years. Bank Night also was a feature one night a week at the Indiana during the 1930s.

The Orpheum first had vaudeville acts and then later changed to movies. For a short time, it was a dance hall.

Then, there were many neighborhood movie houses.

At Twelve Points, there were the Garfield (called the Palace in silent movie days) and Swan theaters. Next door to the Swan, was the booth of Sam, the Popcorn Man. Sam sold popcorn to theatergoers for five cents a sack and put celery salt on it to make it more tasty. He was a great favorite with the young people.

On Wabash Avenue, besides the Varsity downtown, there were the Lyceum, Thirteenth and Wabash; the Iris, Seventeenth and Wabash; the Fountain, between Third and Fourth on Wabash, and the Savoy, between Fourth and Fifth on Wabash.

Locust Street also seemed to be a popular street for theaters. There was the Majestic, Nineteenth and Locust; Little Virginia, Fifteenth and Locust (the building is still there next to Paitson's Grocery), and the Rex, Sixth and Locust.

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Community Affairs File

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TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA

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Citizens Remember Actors

At Twenty-fifth Street and Washington, where the Weldin Talley Playhouse of the Community Theater is located, there was once a movie theater called the Best. Also, at one time there was a movie house next to the northeast corner of Thirteenth and Poplar streets.

In the south part of town, there were the Habit, Seventh and Seabury streets, and the Idaho at Seventh and Hulman streets, where the Idaho Club is now located. According to Paul Frisz, who remembers many of the old theaters and former actors, he once owned a building at Second and Hulman streets, where there was also a theater.

Frisz likes to reminisce about many of the old timers who came here for vaudeville, stock company and road shows as many of them stayed at the old Central Hotel, which he and his wife managed for some time.

Tom White, who has been a motion picture operator here for many years, also enjoys reminiscing about the old theaters here.

Many senior citizens remember the managers who kept in operation so many theaters. They included Pat Heavy, Shannon Katzenbach, Ross Garver, Ben Van Borssum, Herman Arnold John Wycoff, Abe Kaufman, Sam T. Young and Maurice Rein-king.

A BIT OF HISTORY

How John E. Owens was Sebered
up to Open Our Opera House.

The Construction of the Building and
Under Whose Auspices it was
Put Up.

Mlle. Nilsson Thrice Disappoints a
Terre Haute Audience—The Old
Academy of Music Days

The Terre Haute Opera House was thrown open to the public on the night of the 19th of December, 1870, for a performance by John E. Owens, the well-known comedian, who appeared as "Major Wellington DeBoots" in the old English drama "Everybody's Friend." In the spring of 1869 a stock company was organized here for the purpose of providing the public with a suitable place of amusement. The late William B. Warren was president of the company, Charles E. Hosford was its secretary, and the late Samuel S. Early its treasurer. The directors were the following well-known gentlemen: S. S. Early, W. B. Warren, C. E. Hosford, G. E. Brokaw, James McGregor, F. V. Eacnowsky, L. A. Burnett, W. E. McLean, and Owen Tuller.

WHO DID THE WORK.

The contract for the building was let to James Hook, who sublet the brick work to Hiram Blood. The original contract price was \$66,000, but the building, including the ground, finally cost \$150,000. The building was to be 80 by 138 feet, and four ground floor rooms were built for stores. The stone work was done by Wagner & Co., the gas fitting by A. Reif, and the heating apparatus was furnished by a Chicago firm. The painting was done under the supervision of Robert Buckels, now a shoe ill of Oxford, England, and the tin work by George E. Lockwood & Co. The iron work was done at the Phoenix Foundry. The architect of the building was Mr. J. A. Vrydagh, now of Washington, D. C. and all the work was done under his immediate supervision. The scenic work was by Joseph Piggott and at the time it was said there was nothing superior to it outside of New York city. The stage was built for 40 feet deep. The first floor, it was calculated, would seat 600 people, the family circle 500 and the gallery 400, making a total of 1,500 persons. The house, however, will only seat 1,327 persons. M. A. Shrimpton was the first stage manager.

OTHER PLACES OF AMUSEMENT THEN.

For a town like it Terre Haute was at that time poorly off for public halls. Dowling Hall was the only place where traveling companies could show. The Academy of Music was situated on Fifth street between Main and Cherry, since used as the Adelphi and within a few years torn down by Mr. Hulman to make way for a warehouse and stable. At this time the Academy of Music was enjoying its best days. It was open every night, and under the management of Luke Schoolcraft was a successful place of amusement. Schoolcraft has since made a name for himself in the minstrel world, and is now one of the end men and one of the very best men with Taatcher, Primrose & Wes's company. He always remembers Terre Haute with pleasure and never comes here that he does not have a "time" with his old friends, just to be remembering the good old days of '70 and '71. Schoolcraft ran a good variety show. He had a partner named Jake Kern, and after Luke left the place in the early part of '71 Kern wasn't long in running it in the ground.

DECLINE OF THE ACADEMY.

Kern established the can-can, was soundly berated by the papers, and business falling off he was soon compelled, in February, 1871, to flee from the city in order to escape the demands of his company for unpaid salaries. The prices charged at the Academy will look quite steep now. They were: Orchestra, 50 cents; parquette, 25 cts; gallery, 15 cts. Schoolcraft would occasionally get a rousing benefit. He always appeared in burnt cork. There was a girl playing at the Academy who went under the name of Agnes Robisson. She is chiefly remembered for the trouble she got one of Foster's dry goods clerks into. The young man was a frequent visitor at the wine room, and his salary not holding out for the affection he displayed toward her, he had to purloin a set of furs, jewelry and other articles to keep her in presents. When Kern left the Academy it was run as the Theatre Comique.

DOWLING HALL'S OLD DAYS.

Dowling Hall had lots of attraction those days. Reserved seats for entertainments were sold by S. R. Baker, who then, as now, had charge of the postoffice lobby. They were generally sold at 75 cents. It was at Dowling Hall on Dec. 14, 1870, that Madame Rentz's females first made their appearance here. The company broke up a few months later in Illinois on account of lack of patronage. The general admission to Dowling Hall was 50 cents and the boys had to pay 35 cts to go up in the gallery. Now the "gods" fare a little better. Bob McWade was known to inflict four successive nights of his Rip Van Winkle on the people. Tout's band in those days had almost full sway in Terre Haute, though it had a competitor in Cuqua's band whose leader

THE OPENING NIGHT AT THE

HOUSE.

The night John Owens opened the Opera House, will not be soon forgotten by any person who was there. It was a Monday night and Owens was to play four successive nights, giving a change of bill each night. An auction sale of choice seats for the opening night was held on the previous Thursday afternoon on the third floor hall of the opera house building, and tickets were afterward secured at B. G. Cox & Co's. The first choice was sold to Owen Tuller for \$25. S. S. Early and Demas Deming paid \$10 each for the second choice. J. C. McGregor came next at \$8 and G. W. Bement, L. A. Burnett and J. O. Jones got seats for \$5. It was expected that the first choice of seats would have brought more than it did. The regular prices for the opening night were: orchestra chairs, \$1.50; balcony circle, \$1.50; dress circle, \$1; family circle, 75 cents; gallery, 50 cents. A reserve of 75 seats was ordered from Rockville by telegraph and another came from Marshall for 45 seats. Special trains were run from the surrounding towns. The large posters advertising the opening were printed at Cincinnati, and the local job printers kicked hard against this "sfront" to home mechanics. Great interest was taken in the opening. Some people who couldn't get opera glasses here sent to Indianapolis for them. No reserved seats for the opening night were sold in the family circle, but all the first floor was taken. A number of prominent citizens from Indianapolis came over for the occasion. Everybody pronounced the house both as to construction and appointment to be one of the best public halls in the west.

WAITING THREE HOURS FOR JOHN OWENS.

The opening night came, and it was a very unpleasant night, too. The audience was very large and was composed of the best people of the city. They waited and waited for the performance to begin and after admiring the interior until it seemed old the crowd began to manifest its impatience. It was evident that there was a hitch behind the scenes. At length Col. McLean came out and said that Mr. Owens would not get in the city until half past ten o'clock. He was in Indianapolis, and he was coming on a special train. Those who knew the truth knew that the jovial John had gotten on a glorious drunk at the Capital City and that was the reason he was behind time. The people were told they could get their money back if they wanted it, but the crowd remained and drank in the scenery. The time was filled in by music from Tout's band, a recitation of Shamus O'Brien by W. F. Burroughs, an Irish song by Oliver Wren, and the exhibition of the scenery, now quite old, by the way. A short while before 11 the curtain went up. Mr. Owens was advertised to appear in both "Everybody's Friend" and "Solon Shingle" that night, but the hour was so late he only gave the first. The frequent application of cold water to John's head on the way over

sobered him up, but he was not enough of the spree left to act delightfully. The special train he came over on made lightning speed.

THEN THE PRICES FELL.

The public kicked on the high prices, and during the remaining three nights of Mr. Owens' engagement, during which he gave, in addition to the two plays already named, "Happiest Day of My Life," "Forty Winks," "Married Life," "Paul Pry," and "Live Indian," the prices were lowered to a dollar for the first floor, 50 cents for the family circle, and 25 cents for the gallery. Mr. Owens' engagement was not exactly successful, although the Opera House management lost nothing by it. The people complained that Owens did not give a higher order of dramas and then the small houses were also laid to the extremely cold weather that prevailed the rest of that week. The house was next occupied by Prof. McAvoy's variety troupe for one week from the 24th inst.

MILLE NILSSON'S ENGAGEMENT.

The next thing that turned the town upside down was Mlle. Christine Nilsson's engagement to sing here in grand concert. Her engagement was chiefly remarkable, outside of the extraordinary house she drew, for the series of disappointments and postponements before she finally did come. She was first advertised to sing here on the night of January 11th, 1871. That date, however, was changed to Jan. 17th, owing to a change in the route, before advertising begun. Then everybody bought tickets for the 17th. The general admission was \$2, reserved seats were \$3 and \$4 according to location, and the gallery was \$1. The rush for seats was so great that an hour after the sheet was opened at Bartlett's book store all the choice seats were taken. Late in the afternoon of the day she was to sing Max Strakosch, her agent, telegraphed from Indianapolis that Mlle. Nilsson had a sore throat and couldn't sing in Terre Haute that night.

ON CAME THE MADDING CROWD.

It was too late to notify the people that were coming in on all the trains. They came pouring in from Mattoon, Charleston, Paris, Marshall, Newport, Clinton, Rockville and all the surrounding towns. The city was filled up and the hotels were overflowing. A delegation of 30 came up from Evansville. The howl that went up was fearful. The greatest objects for sympathy were the city belles who endured the horror the night before of sleeping with their hair done up in rags. Those who were disappointed in not hearing Nilsson had a chance to descend from the contemplated heights of sublimity to the lowest depths of moral depravity by going to see the can-can at the Fifth street purgatory. To relieve the disappointment in a measure an impromptu hop was given at the Terre Haute House. Some of the visitors went home swearing that night and the rest followed the next morning. For a month before the concert Nilsson was thoroughly discussed. For a month after she was morosely cussed.

Start Razing Of Historic Grand Building

Thursday
7-2-71-60

Feb 10, 1960

The Indiana Wrecking Company Wednesday began razing the historic Grand Opera House Building at Seventh and Cherry streets and Ralph Learnard, head of the wrecking firm, estimated the job would be completed in three months.

The wrecking contract was let at 10:30 a.m. Wednesday by the Terre Haute Hotel Company, operators of the Terre Haute House, and Learnard's crews began wrecking operations at noon.

The structure, erected in 1898 by a firm headed by the late W. P. Ijams and vacated last year, will be removed bite-by bite with the clam shell bucket. Use of the crane claw will eliminate the pile-driving method sometimes used in lowering walls, Learnard advised. An eight-foot protective wall will be constructed around the street level.

The prospect of a cornerstone "located somewhere in the building," was mentioned by Learnard, who added that "if we find one we plan to donate it to the Vigo County Historical Society."

When the razing job is completed the site will become a parking lot.

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Community Affairs File

VIGO COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY
TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA

Crews Removing Historic Building

An empty shell of a building with glassless windows stands looking down on the southeast corner of Seventh and Cherry streets in Terre Haute.

It is all that is left of the memories and history once made in and connected with Terre Haute's historic landmark, the Grand Opera House building.

The only signs of life, in the now lifeless structure, come during the daylight hours, when the wrecking crews of the Ralph Learnard Wrecking Company begin the process of destroying what man has put together. Also, at night, a different sort of life is given to the building by the thousands of starlings who have been chased from other buildings in the downtown area

and who have now taken up their residence on this dying landmark.

For three months the wrecking crews will attack their job, and when everything salvageable has been sold and disposed of, the building gone, it is hoped that the building's enigmatic cornerstone will have been turned up. If it is, it will be turned over to the Vigo County Historical Society Museum, according to Mr. Learnard.

In three months the memories will be tucked away in the minds of those who knew the proud history of the Grand Opera House building. Perhaps those same people, who will cherish the memories of the past, will someday be parking their modern automobiles in the parking lot which will take the place of that corner of Terre Haute history, at Seventh and Cherry streets.

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VIGO COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA

Tribune-Star Buys Theatre Building

Theaters (Grand) (TH) Community Affairs File

Friday **MAY 26 1978**
It was announced Thursday that the Tribune-Star Publishing Co. had purchased the building housing the Grand Theatre at 729 Wabash Avenue.

An announcement from the theatre management immediately following stated the "house lights" would be turned off at the close of business Monday, and there would be no further scheduling of movies.

The building has been used as a movie house for many years. Predecessor of

the Grand Theatre was the Liberty, which showed silent movies, and was one of nine downtown movies houses during the 1920's.

The Grand moved from the Grand Opera House, the city's first legitimate theatre, which stood at 7th and Cherry streets, and was razed to provide a parking lot for the Terre Haute House.

Although there was no immediate indication of a use for the building, it is expected to be used for expansion of the Tribune-Star production facilities.

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Community Affairs File

Vigo County Public Library

5/19/1959
9-18-1959 (Star)

Theater Farewell To Stir Memories Of Gay 90s Here

Reminiscences are called forth by the program for the gala farewell for the Grand Theatre, which will be staged at 8:30 o'clock Monday night at the 62-year-old opera house.

Printed in the style of a half century ago, the program carries the advertisements seen in programs at the Grand at the turn of the century.

THE EVENING'S program will open with the showing of a moving picture, "The Golden Age of Comedy." Following a 10-minute intermission, there will be the introduction of honored guests by

the master of ceremonies, listed in the program as "Hon. William P. Allyn, Esq." Mrs. Hamilton Coleman of Hendersonville, N. C., who was a musical comedy star appearing at the Grand in the early part of the century, is among the honored guests.

This part of the program also will feature "An Interlude of Memorable Moments." Closing feature of the program will be the presentation of Sir James M. Brassie's "The Twelve Pound Look" by Community Theatre of Terre Haute, Inc.

ONE PAGE of the program states "This benefit made possible through the magnanimous generosity of Mr. Ed Kennelley and the Alliance Theatre Corporation, Terre Haute Federation of Musicians Local No. 25, Stagehands Union Local No. 49, Motion Picture Operators Local No. 373, Vigo County Historical Society, Terre Haute Chamber of

Commerce, Inc., and Terre Haute House."

Members of the stagehands union listed in the program are Charles Knott, president; Frank Caldwell, business agent; Bill Knott, treasurer; Joe Work, secretary; Pete Hurst and Ray Martin.

JANE CUNNINGHAM Hazeldine is director of the one-act play being produced by Robert M. Wiandt and Ray Gooderl. Alice Koch has served as script holder.

Prices appearing in advertisements in the program are breathtaking because of their cheapness in view of today's prices. Five-year-old Kentucky whisky is quoted at \$2.50 a gallon and California wines at \$1. Tailor-made suits were advertised with coats 36, 42 and 45 inches long and skirts in 9, 13 and 15 gored effects, also a few pleated models."

THE TERRE HAUTE Transfer Company advertised "Hello 90 or 95 for cabs and baggage wagon." Another ad listed "both phones 101" recalling to many persons when there were two local telephone companies in operation here and the trouble one had talking with a friend if the telephones were not in the same exchange.

No doubt there will be many chuckles emanating from a close perusal of the program.

A dinner at 6:30 o'clock Monday evening in the Terre Haute House Wabash Room will precede the theatre farewell. Reservations may be made with Ronald Waltermire, C-2537, today and tomorrow and with the Terre Haute House, C-3341, until Sunday evening.

Persons attending both or either event have been urged to wear costumes of the early part of the century or through the twenties if possible.

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TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA

5-9-17-59

Banquet Planned In Gala Farewell To Grand Theater

Two new facets of the gala farewell to the Grand Theatre Monday night at 8:30 o'clock were announced yesterday at a luncheon meeting at the Terre Haute House of chairmen of committees working on the event with representatives of the various news media and Ed. Kennelly, manager of the Grand.

There will be a banquet preceding the show at the theatre. It will be served at 6:30 o'clock in the Wabash Room of the Terre Haute House. Lester Wolf will be the toastmaster. Reservations for it are to be made by Sunday evening either with Ronald Waltermire, C-2537, or the Terre Haute House, C-3341.

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A PIECE of the stage of the Grand will be taken up and placed in the stage of the Weldin Talley Memorial Theatre to preserve a part of the opera house for posterity, it was announced.

Mr. Kennelly said yesterday that he and S. J. Gregory of Alliance Theatre Corporation, which operates the Grand, were deeply grateful to Community Theatre for sponsoring the farewell to the 62-year-old opera house. The Grand opened Nov. 2, 1897, six months after construction started, with the play, "Isle of Champagne."

Persons attending the dinner and the farewell performance have been urged to attend in costume. "Surely many of the women will find old shawls among their possessions which they can throw about their shoulders," said one of the avid enthusiasts of the event.

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A PIT ORCHESTRA will provide music for the event under the direction of Arthur D. Hill. Arrangements have been made for this through the courtesy of the musician's union, it was announced.

The theater box office will open at 9 o'clock Monday morning, staffed by Grand Theatre personnel, and remain open until 9 o'clock in the evening. Meanwhile in the lobby of the theater, Community Theatre members will have season tickets on sale. The season ticket sale will close Oct. 16 with the opening of the first play of the season, "Gigi."

Program of the performance, to be emceed by Dr. William P. Allyn, will include the showing of "The Golden Age of Comedy," presentation of "The Twelve Pound Look," one-act play by James M. Barrie, the appearance of Mrs. Hamilton Coleman, one of the former musical comedy stars who played the Grand in its early days, and a short talk by Mayor Ralph Tucker.

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Chorus Girl in Early Musical Show At Grand Reminisces Old Stage Days

BY SARAH E. BENCE

Reminiscences of the theater in the early part of the century literally flowed from Lena Shaw Coleman yesterday afternoon as she talked with old friends and new acquaintances at the home of her friends, Mr. and Mrs. Malcolm A. Steele, 627 Beech Street.

The former actress and native of near Tic Ridge, now Blanford,

arrived Thursday from Hendersonville, N. C., to participate in the gala farewell to the Grand Theater which will be at 8:30 o'clock Monday night. A dinner at the Terre Haute House is to precede the program. The dinner will be served at 6:30 o'clock.

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MRS. COLEMAN chatted with her host and hostess, with Morton F. Hayman, who is here from Chicago to visit with her and attend the farewell, and with Jane Cunningham Hazledine, whose name is synonymous with Community Theatre and who is directing the one-act play for the farewell presentation. Mr. Hayman is one of the early members and past presidents of Community Theatre, for which the farewell performance will be a benefit.

The former actress, who certainly belies her almost 81 years, reserved a number of her anecdotes of her local appearances for the "Interlude of Memorable Moments," which will be one

part of the second section of Monday's program.

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IT WAS at the turn of the century that she, quite by accident, became a part of the chorus of "The Burgomaster," one of the three musical comedies written by Gustav Luders. Eventually she was singled out for bit parts and more parts until she was the understudy for the principal woman's part. From it she went on to many musical comedies.

Her salary to start was \$15 a week. Out of that she paid her mother \$5 a week for room and board since it was against her mother's principles that she, a convent-bred girl, be on the stage. And she was required to purchase her own tights, shoes and make-up.

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SHE FIRST appeared at the Grand in "The Burgomaster" and her last appearance there was in "The Land of Nod." "But I wasn't a star," she declares, "I was only a bit player." Later she was here in vaudeville, in a song and dance act with her partner, Al Laughlin. "It was the day of the tango and the hesitation waltz," she explained, "and we brought to the rest of the country what Irene and Vernon Castle were doing in New York."

Mrs. Coleman recalled staying both at the Terre Haute House and the Filbeck Hotels when she played here. "It was the 'old' Terre Haute House," she explained, "and we chorus girls would double up so we could get our room for \$1 a day, American plan."

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HER THEATRICAL career began the day she accompanied a friend backstage at Chicago while Luders was auditioning girls to replace a girl whom he had fired from the chorus. She was only a spectator but was self-conscious and, since she was not supposed to be in the theater, she had seated herself in a corner.

When Luders had auditioned several and found no one with a voice, he became a bit temperamental. After his bit of histrionics, he pointed at her, and demanded she come forward. A remark made her angry and she lost her speechlessness and sang well. (She had studied voice.)

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THEN IT WAS her mother's ire she feared. She had to cope with that before she finally began her rehearsals and became a full-fledged member of the cast.

Mrs. Coleman was born on her grandfather's farm and after moving to Chicago, spent many Summers at Clinton with relatives, a number of whom are planning to be here Monday night to see her and attend the farewell. She also visited an aunt here one Summer and through that visit became acquainted with Mr. Steele and later, Mrs. Steele, the friendship growing with the years.

She recalls teaching Valeska

Suratt, Terre Haute's slinky actress of the early part of the century, how to make-up when she was starting her career as a "vampire."

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MR. COLEMAN was a director and was associated with Richard Mansfield for five years. He was forced to retire following World War I because of a progressive and eventual fatal illness and she retired to care for him. He died six years ago last month.

Only two weeks before he died he completed the manuscript for a small volume, "Shakespeare and the Bible," which she had published posthumously in 1955.

Since his death she has been most active in civic affairs in Hendersonville. She also is interested in the Vagabond Players located at Flat Rock, N. C., and the Flat Rock Playhouse. While she is here she will visit the Weldin Talley Memorial Playhouse, probably for a rehearsal of "The Twelve Pound Look," one-act comedy to be presented on Monday night's program.

SHE and Mr. Coleman had one child, a daughter Evelin, who was married to Col. Timothy Taracouzio, who served as Russian consultant to President Eisenhower prior to his death about a year and a half ago. There is one grandson, Lon Anthony, who is in Christ School at Arden, near Hendersonville.

Mrs. Coleman, who doesn't like formality, is quite proud of the fact that she wears glasses only to read and tells with a chuckle of going to get her driver's license. The official asked her to put on her glasses. "I don't wear them," she said. He looked askance and then gave her a rigid eye examination. When he was through, he said not a word about her eyes, but exclaimed, "Well, I'll be damned!" (End)



FAREWELL PRINCIPALS — Mrs. Hamilton Coleman, right, who played the Grand Theater as Lena Francis and as Lena Shaw Coleman in the early part of the century, and Jane Cunningham Hazeldine, who is directing the one-act comedy, "The Twelve Pound Look," which will be part of the farewell program Monday night, look over some of the pictures of Mrs. Coleman taken during her starring days. Mrs. Coleman came from Henderson, N. C., to participate in the farewell.

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TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA

Grand Theatre Farewell Program Plans Complete

9-19-57
Plans have been completed for the final performance at the Grand Theatre next Monday evening at 8:30 o'clock. The farewell is sponsored by Community Theatre of Terre Haute with the aid and advice of several other interested persons.

One of the early stars of musical comedy who appeared at the Grand Theatre in starring roles during its hey day will be here for the gala farewell to the theatre for which Dr. William P. Allyn will be master of ceremonies.

She is Mrs. Hamilton Coleman of Hendersonville, N. C., the former Lena Shaw, whose stage name was Lena Francis.

Although not a native of this community, she visited her aunt here as a girl and also was a frequent visitor to the city when spending time at Clinton with relatives named Clover. It was through these visits that she formed a lifetime friendship with Mrs. Malcolm A. Steele of 627 Beech street, whose guest she will be during her stay here.

Mrs. Coleman had planned a visit here this fall. Mrs. Kenneth Hazledine heard of this and knowing of her former connec-

tion with the stage, Mrs. Hazledine asked Mrs. Steele and her husband if they thought she could be persuaded to be here for the event. A call to Mrs. Coleman resulted in her planned presence for the farewell.

First Appearance.

Her first appearance here on the stage was in "The Burgomaster" in 1901, it is believed. She played in musical comedy until about 41 years ago when her husband, who had been one of the great theatrical directors of his day, was stricken with a slowly progressive illness and incurable disease. She retired to take care of him. He died in 1953.

Since his death she has been active in community work at Hendersonville, aiding its Flat Rock Theatre in many ways.

Dr. Allyn, professor of zoology at Indiana State Teachers College, is noted throughout the area for his ability as a speaker and master of ceremonies and for his wit and humor. He will review the Grand's history and

introduce many of the audience in connection with the Grand's past.

Evening Program.

Program for the evening will include the presentation of the motion picture, "The Golden Age of Comedy," and the one-act play, "The Twelve-Pound Look," by James M. Barrie.

Mrs. Hazledine is directing the play. Characters in it and those playing the parts are: Tombes, the English butler, played by

David Lee; Sir Harry Sims, played by Dr. G. David Koch; his wife, Lady Sims, played by Mrs. Rhea Anderson, and his former wife, Kate, played by Mrs. Peggy Thornton.

A number of patrons are interested in wearing costumes. Those in charge said last night that all persons interested in attending the event in costumes of the period when stage plays and concerts were seen and heard regularly at the Grand are urged to do so.

Tickets for the event may be obtained at the Grand, at Pearce's Men's Wear in Meadows Center, at Carl Wolf, Inc., and at the two Wiant's Jewelers—at 642 Wabash avenue and in the Southland Shopping Center.

A luncheon meeting will be held Wednesday at 12 o'clock noon in the Green Room of the Terre Haute House by members of all committees working on plans for the stellar event and news media.

Miss Nancy Langen, publicity chairman for Community Theatre, will preside at the meeting.

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